

Missouri's Statewide Integrated Delivery System for Providing Legal Services:

An Evaluation of Progress

Missouri developed a comprehensive and ambitious plan to create a statewide integrated delivery system for providing legal services to low income residents. This plan, *The Missouri Plan for Equal Access to Justice*, (State Plan) was the result of an intensive planning process with stakeholders from the legal services community, the bar and the courts. The State Plan was submitted to the Legal Services Corporation in January, 2000. The following is a description of Missouri's progress in implementing this plan and a response to Program Letter 2000-7.

The Development of the Statewide System and Achievement of Outcomes A Response to Questions One and Two

Building Missouri's State Justice Community

Missouri is a state with both large rural areas and cities with large urban cores. Like many states, the growth in both population and economy is occurring in the suburban areas of the state rather than the rural or urban core areas. Although the population makeup in the urban core and rural areas are very different, the overarching problems are the same: there is little new economic growth or job availability in these areas; public transportation is poor in many areas of the cities and nonexistent in rural areas; the lack of affordable housing continues to be a pressing problem as low income housing is torn down and not adequately replaced.

The response of the state government to many of these problems has been less than adequate. State policies often exacerbate the underlying economic and social issues that place Missouri 31st in the nation for child well being.¹ For example, Missouri adopted the “Hancock Amendment” which requires the state to refund to taxpayers any budget surpluses. As the economy has faltered, so has the state budget. This year, the Governor has cut all state departments substantially and has vetoed funding for many social services programs, including legal services. Schools are in decline due to lack of resources and poor policy decisions on the part of the state. E.g., the adoption of the Missouri Safe Schools Act has increased the number of children suspended from school to a rate of one child per minute.² State legislation³ removed the caps on interest rates on small loans which increases predatory lending practices.

The Missouri State Plan created mechanisms that can begin to address these issues in a more systemic fashion. Two of these, the Missouri Legal Services Support Center (Support Center) and the Missouri Legal Services Commission (Commission) only became fully operational in 2001. However, even in this short time frame, some real progress has been made. The Commission, appointed by the Missouri Supreme Court and the Missouri Bar to assess the delivery of civil legal services has met to discuss the funding crisis and the progress of the state in achieving the outcomes in the State Plan. Members of the Commission, comprised of attorneys, judges, and legal services clients

¹ 2001 Kids Count Data Book, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD., www.aecf.org. National Composite Rank Based on Child Well Being Indicators. The indicators of child well being include percent of children living in poverty, percent of children living with parents who do not have full-time, year-round employment, percent of families with children headed by a single parent, percent of low birth weight babies, infant mortality rates, child death rate (ages 1-14), rate of teen deaths rated by accident, homicide, and suicide (ages 15-19), teen birth rate, percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19), and percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16-19).

², “State of Missouri’s Children 2000”, Children in the States, Children’s Defense Fund, www.childrendefense.org/states/data-mo.htm.

have agreed to participate in state strategic planning action teams. Two of the teams, Resource Development and Needs Assessment, are preparing to meet in November. Other action teams will be established as continued progress is made. The Commission can also become a forum for educating members about the issues most directly affecting low-income people in Missouri.

The Support Center, as the coordinating entity for the state plan, has undertaken several initiatives that will build the state justice community and enhance its ability to address the legal needs of low-income individuals. Staff from the Support Center and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri worked with Washington University Law School to coordinate the “*AALS⁴ Access to Equal Justice Symposium: A Dialogue Between the University and Legal Community to Improve the Delivery of Legal Services and Justice to Underrepresented Individuals in Our Region*” on March 23, 2001.

The Symposium featured speakers from the Missouri Supreme Court, Missouri’s Legal Services Programs, Washington University School of Law, Missouri State Public Defender’s Office, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, University of Missouri-Columbia Department of Political Science, St. Louis University School of Law, Southern Illinois University School of Law, University of Tennessee School of Law, Office of the U.S. Attorney, St. Louis City Municipal Courts, St Louis Board of Police Commissioners, staff from Urban Strategies, a community development entity, and Susan Rosenberg, a federal prisoner pardoned by President Clinton.

Over 200 individuals attended the conference, including members of the Missouri Legislature, the private bar, the judiciary, and community groups. The success of the

³ RSMO sec. 408.100 (1998)

⁴ American Association of Law Schools

conference in building relationships and providing a forum for individuals in the state justice community to address specific issues has led to plans to have another conference in February, 2002.

The Support Center also coordinated the development of two statewide grant proposals (described below), one related to technology and the other to expand services to seniors. The development of these proposals required building and strengthening relationships with community groups and state agencies and entities, including the Missouri Division of Aging, the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Missouri Assistive Technology Program of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging. These entities are important partners in achieving greater access to justice in Missouri. The staff of the Support Center have also provided assistance to the statewide substantive law Task Forces (described below) so that they can function more effectively.

The Task Forces share information about substantive law issues, provide support to attorneys in programs that have fewer resources or less expertise in a particular area and build leadership skills. For example, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) has a program called the Children's Legal Alliance which specializes in educational issues, including suspension and expulsion cases. The managing attorney for that program is the chair of the Education Task Force and directs the information sharing and support on these issues through a list serve for Task Force members.

The Task Force structure provides the opportunity for members to learn of and take advantage of the knowledge gained from innovative projects funded by various entities. Legal Aid of Western Missouri (LAWMO) has a Community Economic

Development Unit that receives funds from a variety of sources, including a HUD grant. The Unit utilizes innovative strategies for creating affordable and habitable housing and neighborhoods. The Unit also determines, through testing, if there is discrimination on the basis of race or disability by residential lenders and then seeks appropriate remedies.

In addition to sharing information and providing support among programs, this new collaboration has created opportunities for co-counseling by experienced attorneys from one program to counsel with attorneys from another program. Legal Services of Southern Missouri (LSOSM) recently opened an office in Cape Girardeau, located in the southeast part of the state and one of the poorest areas of Missouri. Finding that African-Americans were being unfairly treated in public housing, the program has filed suit in federal court. Experienced housing attorneys from LSEM are co-counseling this case with attorneys from LSOSM.

The Task Forces have also worked with the Support Center to develop the statewide training for legal services that will take place at a conference in October. In addition to substantive law training, the conference will include training for representatives from the boards of directors for each of the legal services programs. This will be the first time that Missouri has brought board members, particularly client board members, to a statewide legal services training.

The chairs of each of the Task Forces are assuming more responsibilities regarding the work of the Task Forces and leading the Task Forces in identification of policy issues and next steps. This provides the chairs with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills in a group comprised of individuals from across the state.

Attorneys from each of the four programs chair various Task Forces. Three of the Task Force chairs are women and one of the other chairs is a person with a disability.

The Delivery System

Missouri now has four regional legal services programs following the successful merger of the three programs in the southern part of the state into one program. Each program is governed by a board of directors that sets the priorities for the program. The programs utilize the services of staff attorneys, pro bono attorneys, and private judicare attorneys. Each program has a toll-free phone number for information, intake and advice. A state web site is being developed with funding from a TIG award from LSC. The web site will provide clients with email and web links to each program, informational material about legal rights, self-help and pro se materials, and links to community providers and resources. The web site will also have a section for advocates that includes 1) document and brief banks and 2) links to state and national legal resources, community providers and the Missouri Bar web site.

The four programs utilize a variety of methods for communicating with non-English speaking clients and clients with communication disabilities. Two of the programs have staff that speak Spanish; the other two have access to Spanish interpreters in the community. The programs also use the Language Line Service which provides interpreters for 150 languages. These interpreters can be accessed within a few minutes by telephone. Missouri also has a statewide Relay system which provides phone services for persons with communication disorders. In addition to the Relay Service, two of the programs have TTYs in their offices. The programs also have long standing relationships

with the community agencies that provide services to many new immigrant groups. As the web site is being developed, accessible screens in other languages will be explored.

Each of the programs directs extensive outreach and community education efforts regarding the services offered by the program, and information about legal rights and legal issues. The development of the state web site will increase this effort by directly involving community agencies that provide services to elders, persons with disabilities and victims of domestic violence to ensure the accessibility and usefulness of the web site. It will also involve state entities that provide training and information to community groups. These agencies will increase the scope of outreach regarding legal services by disseminating information about the web site to their community partners.

As noted above, staff from each program participate in the state substantive law Task Forces. The Task Forces include Public Benefits and Health, Housing, Education, Disability, Consumer Law, Family Law and Technology. Each of the Task Forces has a list serve where members can share information, discuss and identify policy issues, and provide support and mentoring to junior attorneys. The Task Forces will be involved in the development of substantive materials for the web site which can also be downloaded and used by each program. The Task Forces also identify staff training needs and helped the MLSSC plan the Missouri Legal Services Statewide Training Conference which is October 11th and 12th, 2001.

Missouri is a large state that has many rural counties and, as a result, reaching low-income rural individuals is an ongoing challenge. In addition to utilizing judicare to provide legal representation to individuals in remote rural areas, Missouri has moved forward on several initiatives to reach this group. Three new legal services offices have

been opened this year in rural areas of the state. Legal Services of Southern Missouri (LSOSM) opened an office in Cape Girardeau, Missouri; Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) opened an office in Union, Missouri; and Legal Aid of Western Missouri (LAWMO) opened an office in Carthage, Missouri. These towns are surrounded by counties with high poverty populations.⁵

Rural development, - that is, increasing the resources available to provide legal services - is an area that the Missouri Legal Services Commission will be addressing early next year. In the meantime, the individual programs remain committed to increasing services to rural populations. In addition to opening the new rural offices, the programs have increased their efforts to obtain more funding for services in rural areas. LSOSM has hired a development director who has begun fund raising efforts for projects to assist the rural poor and elderly. Mid-Missouri Legal Services (MMLS) has recently received funds to increase the hours of operation for the office in Jefferson City to include Saturday hours in order to be more accessible to its clients. In addition, MMLS has received funding to increase its services to victims of domestic violence to include low-income individuals at 125-150% of poverty.

LSEM and LAWMO have major fundraising campaigns underway that will increase funding for the rural counties in their programs. LAWMO was a recent recipient of funds from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to increase services to women in the rural areas of western Missouri. The VOCA grant will supplement the current funding

⁵ The office in Union provides services to residents of Washington County which has a poverty population of 23.5%. The office in Cape Girardeau provides services to Mississippi County (26.1%), Stoddard County (17%) and Bollinger County (17.3%). The office in Carthage serves Jasper County (14%), McDonald County (19%) and Newton County (12.9%). Missouri Census Data Center, Missouri State Library, Office of the Secretary of State.

from a STOP/VAWA grant (funded through the Violence Against Women Act) that has added an attorney to each of the three rural offices.

Missouri is a recipient of an LSC grant to develop a program to provide services to migrant workers. Using these funds as a starting point, the program has been able to secure more funds to provide needed services in the south-east and north-central parts of the state, where most migrant farm workers are located. In addition, significant outreach efforts are being undertaken to workers in the chicken processing plants in southwest part of Missouri, particularly to those who are Spanish speakers and other new immigrants.

Two statewide grant proposals recently submitted will also provide the foundation for ensuring greater access in rural areas and to other hard to reach groups. The first is the Technology Integration and Outreach Partnership, a TIG proposal that will receive funding from LSC. The web site portion of the proposal, discussed above, provides the opportunity to creatively work with other community entities trying to reach rural and isolated individuals. Two of the three groups that will be testing the accessibility and usability of the web site are elders, specifically those in the southern part of the state, and persons with disabilities. Both of these groups have increased access to computers and the internet through state and private funding.

Southwest Missouri Office on Aging received a grant from a private entity that will provide computers and internet access in every senior center and agency office in its region. Missouri has expanded its Telephone Equipment Distribution Program that provides accessible telephone equipment to persons with disabilities to include the provision of computers and internet access. Community and governmental agencies are recognizing that access to computers and the world wide web can provide information,

referrals, and in some cases, services to individuals who are in rural areas, who have mobility problems, and who have transportation problems.

In addition to the web site, the technology initiative will begin to make the technology infrastructure more standardized and will even out some of the disparities between larger and smaller offices. The initiative will coordinate case management among the programs to enable the state planners to better assess the ongoing needs and systemic issues that need to be addressed. Once the infrastructure is in place, creative uses of technology to increase legal services for individuals with access barriers can be implemented.

The other statewide grant proposal initiated this year was a for a statewide senior legal hotline. This proposal is a collaborative effort among the legal services programs, the Missouri Division of Aging, the Area Agencies on Aging and the Missouri Bar to provide information, advice and brief services, and program referral through a toll free number. A comprehensive and coordinated process for outreach, information and referral, and systemic policy development was proposed to serve Missouri's elder population. Of particular interest to the aging community and legal services community was to include in the proposal outreach to rural elders in the state.

The project includes an evaluation component, so that, if funded, it will serve as a pilot to test the efficacy of statewide intake in Missouri. Currently, each legal services program has its own regional intake system designed to respond to Missouri's long tradition of local control. The 114 counties in Missouri create local rules, policies and practice that present a challenge in creating an effective statewide intake system. The

senior legal hotline, coupled with the new technology infrastructure will help make a new intake system possible.

Another important part of the delivery system is the involvement of the private bar in every aspect of the system. The Missouri Bar provides staffing and support for the Missouri Legal Services Commission, and collaborates with the programs regarding web site development and recruitment of attorneys for pro bono efforts. Members of the Missouri Bar have an outstanding record of donating time to the Volunteer Lawyer and Pro Bono projects operated by the legal services programs. Three of the programs have full time staff devoted to working with the local bar associations and managing these volunteer programs, which include over 3,000 attorneys in Missouri. In addition, attorneys in rural areas of the state augment services by participating in judicare for each of the programs.

Needs Assessment and Evaluation

The Missouri Legal Services Commission is charged with overseeing Missouri's progress in implementing the State Plan for Legal Services. The Commission has already met twice during the first half of 2001 and has been actively reviewing the activities of the State Support Center and the four regions in meeting the goals outlined in the Plan. The Commission has also taken an active role in working with the legal services community in additional strategic planning activities involving such issues and needs assessment and resource development.

The Missouri Bar provided funding to conduct a statewide assessment of legal needs by a professor at the University of Missouri. The data has been collected and is

currently being analyzed and put into a report format. This information will provide a framework that the Needs Assessment Action Team of the Missouri Legal Services Commission (Commission) will utilize as it assesses the legal needs of the people in Missouri and as it evaluates the performance of the current system. The Action Team will also examine the various assessment tools that are currently being utilized in the programs and create a new protocol for evaluating the system

The Missouri programs utilize various tools to evaluate their services and performance. Many agencies that provide funds for services and special projects require that some kind of evaluation or outcome assessment be undertaken. For example, LSEM and LAWMO are recipients of HUD grants that require progress reports that provide in-depth program evaluation and outcome analysis. Local funders often require grantees to use client satisfaction surveys. The Ryan White Title I Program encourages a cost/benefit analysis to compare program grant dollars provided to the amount of benefits obtained for clients. In addition, some projects have developed their own, more sophisticated outcome evaluation instruments in order to provide better services and obtain more funding.

The Children's Legal Alliance, (described above) worked with a professor of social work to develop an extensive assessment tool that includes a three part evaluation of the holistic educational services provided. The first part describes the child's educational and mental health issues and problems upon referral to the program. The second part lists the educational services obtained as a result of legal representation; the mental health, community, and family services obtained; and the systemic issues that were identified during the case. The third part tracks the educational progress of the child

at the time of the referral, at the time the case was closed, one semester after the case was closed, and two semesters after the case was closed.

Each of these types of evaluation – program outcomes, client satisfaction, cost savings, and client outcomes are important not only in determining the efficacy of the system, but in determining whether the system is truly client-centered. An important way to ensure that the system is client-centered is not only to include client board members in the planning process as Missouri does, but to ensure that the end result is a positive outcome for the client. A positive outcome may include something as far-reaching as the long-term outcomes gauged by the educational evaluation. It may include more immediate and equally important outcomes – making our clients feel they were listened to, that their concerns and problems were taken seriously, and that they received effective representation.

While not every type of evaluation or outcome assessment tool is appropriate for every unit in legal services, using a variety of assessment tools can provide a broader picture of how the system is functioning and responding to client needs. The Needs Assessment Action Team of the Commission will have to determine which combination of tools is appropriate for analyzing the performance of the state system.

System Challenges

A severe budget crisis is looming in Missouri due, in part, to the Hancock Amendment, described above, and the slowing economy. As a result, state departments are undergoing significant budget cuts and social services programs are losing state support and funding. A veto of a significant portion of state funding for legal services

dominated the last meeting of the Missouri Legal Services Commission (Commission). As noted above, the Commission has discussed strategies for managing this crisis and is working with a special committee of the Missouri Bar to address the shortfall in funding through the legislative process.

Missouri has worked, not always with complete success, to think of itself as an entity greater than the sum of its parts. The traditional view and practice in most services in the state is to operate locally, and then regionally, and when challenged, as a state. The legal services programs came out of and function in this environment. Most of the state justice leaders understand the value and power of a statewide system to leverage scarce resources, improve the quality of services and, most importantly, provide better and more permanent outcomes for our clients.

However, more training and information sharing about the advantages of a statewide system needs to be undertaken in order for the state to continue to move forward. In many respects, professionals in the legal services community must have a comparable opportunity to learn and explore the advantages of a statewide service system that was afforded the planners of such a system. Everyone in the legal services community must be cognizant of the value and need to collaborate with other programs. Program boards must be willing to look at their resources and obligations from a broader perspective. To be a state justice “community”, the individuals in it must feel a part of this community. This issue will continue to be addressed at the Missouri Statewide Legal Services Conference in October with a plenary session on state planning, training for local boards, Task Force meetings, and statewide panels addressing various substantive issues.

It would be helpful to have national technical assistance provided on a regional basis. States that have successfully overcome various obstacles to statewide system integration and those that are still working to overcome these barriers should have the opportunity for frank and open discussions. National or regional trainings and conferences on substantive issues should integrate into each component a discussion on how a statewide system can more effectively deal with policy issues affecting our clients. That information would be inspiring and motivating to program staff as well as state planners.

Missouri's Legal Services System, Configuration and Resource Management

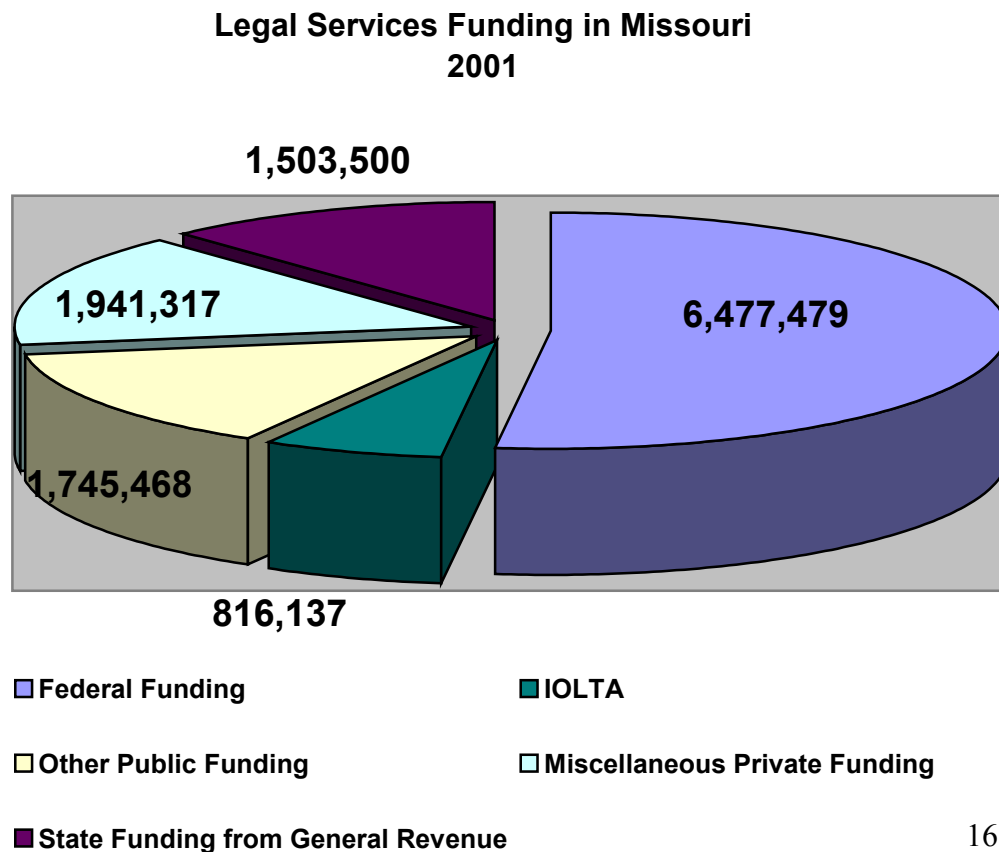
A Response to Question 3

Current Configuration of programs in Missouri

As already stated, Missouri's legal services system is made up of four regional offices with an additional network of satellite offices supporting work within the regions. This network of regional offices and satellite offices provides statewide coverage to all 114 counties and the City of St. Louis, in Missouri. This regional service system is supported by the recent creation of the Missouri Legal Services Support Center that is funded proportionally by the four regional offices. The Support Center is designed to promote the integration and coordination of services within and across the four regions of Missouri. This work is guided by the Missouri Plan for Equal Access to Justice and by the Missouri Legal Services Commission that is charged with overseeing the progress made in implementing the Plan.

Missouri's legal service system is made up of four regional programs which work together to provide legal services to the entire State. Legal Aid of Western Missouri (LAWMO) serves a forty county area and at 100% of poverty has a poor population of 205,639. Legal Aid of Western Missouri serves 31.0% of the poor population of the State. Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) serves a 21 county area and provides legal services to a poor population of 216,110. Legal Services of Eastern Missouri represents 32.6% of the poor population of the State. Legal Services of Southern Missouri serves a 43 county area and provides legal services to a poor population of 199,151. This represents 30.0% of the total poor population of the State. Mid-Missouri Legal Services provides legal services to an eleven county area and has a poor population of 42,175. The region served by Mid-Missouri Legal Services represents 6.4% of the total poor population of the State.

In 2001, the legal services system in Missouri received \$12,483,901 in total



funding. The largest percentage of funding was received from the Legal Services Corporation in the amount of \$6,477,479. Miscellaneous private funding represented \$1,941,317 with other forms of public funding accounting for \$1,745,468 of the total. State funding from general revenue totaled \$1,503,500 in 2001 with IOLTA funding totaling \$816,137.

Brief History of Missouri's Configuration Transformation

Over the last twenty-five years Missouri has gone through many changes and reorganizations of its legal services system. When the Legal Services Corporation Act was passed in 1974, there were seven legal aid programs operating in Missouri: St. Louis, Kansas City, Boone County, Springfield, Rolla, Hannibal and the Southeast Bootheel area of the State. Kansas City and St. Louis were the most organized of the five programs operating with full time staff attorneys. The Bootheel program had just come into existence from a grant from Catholic Charities, and the Boone County and Springfield programs operated primarily with volunteer attorneys. For the most part, these programs served their immediate areas and operated totally independently of each other.

Several programs in Missouri had been receiving federal legal services funds since the early 1960's. Programs in Missouri began receiving funding from the Legal Services Corporation after the Act was passed in 1974. In 1977, increased funding to those areas allowed services to be provided to adjoining counties, thus beginning the initial development of a limited regional service system in Missouri. In 1978, Kansas City expanded their services to the south to include the Joplin, Missouri area some 160 miles to the south. By the late 70's all the programs in Missouri were receiving federal

dollars for legal services and every county was being covered by one of the regional service areas. The legal service configuration remained much the same until 1995 when the program in Hannibal merged with the St. Louis program, creating six regional programs in Missouri.

The six programs had created independent boards and defined their service delivery system based on a combination of need, geography and resources. Legal Aid of Western Missouri (LAWMO) and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) used a system of primarily full time staff attorneys. Mid Missouri Legal Services provided services predominantly through the use of full time attorneys but also incorporated a judicare component to address some rural needs. Legal Aid of Southwest Missouri, Meremac Area Legal Services and the Southeast Missouri Legal Services used a combination of staff attorneys and judicare to provide services over their large and predominantly rural geographic areas.

In 1998, the Legal Services Corporation through its Program Letter 98-6, challenged states to review their systems and determine whether legal services were being provided in the most effective and economical manner possible. In response to LSC's request, the Missouri Bar established a Committee to review Missouri's legal services system and provide input as to how services could be improved throughout the State. The Committee's membership included the Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court, President of the Missouri Bar, attorneys from local bar associations from the regions, President of the Missouri IOLTA Program, each region's Board Chairperson and Directors, representatives from Missouri's Social Service Agencies and lay representatives. In September 1998, after considerable work and a review of many

possible reconfiguration designs, the Committee submitted its report to the Legal Services Corporation supporting the existing configuration of programs in Missouri.

The Missouri Bar Committee discussed and analyzed numerous factors including: any administrative cost benefits from reorganizing; improved services and access to clients; potential increases or decreases in staff to client ratios; and community planning benefits. It also discussed at length numerous reconfiguration designs in an attempt to analyze possible ways to more effectively and efficiently provide legal services across the state. Included in these discussions was the concept of merging the state into one single legal service entity. After many meetings and much discussion the Committee determined that Missouri would not benefit from a reorganization of its six existing programs.

Following additional input and encouragement from the Legal Services Corporation concerning the matter of reorganization, Missouri continued to review this issue. As part of this review, the three programs that covered the southern portion of Missouri again explored the idea of merger. From these discussions came the merger of the three southern programs into one program in the southern region of Missouri. Legal Aid of Southwest Missouri, Southeast Missouri Legal Services and Meremac Area Legal Services merged into one program. This merger created the four-region configuration for the provision of legal services that exists in Missouri today. (See the attached maps.)

The provision of legal services in Missouri has undergone considerable evolution over the last 25 years. What started as a small set of local programs eventually grew and developed into a regional service delivery system. Each of these regional programs continued to grow and evolve to meet the needs of communities and clients in their areas.

This evolution continued as programs were able to access funds and develop services to meet the needs of an ever-growing client population.

The “System” Today

Missouri is in the early stages of working toward outcomes of a statewide planning process. After having spent considerable time and energy discussing issues of reconfiguration in Missouri, much of the planning focus over the last two years has been directed at supporting the Southern Region in their merger and creating and implementing a statewide planning approach which integrates and compliments the four existing programs. This planning emphasis which started with a sincere desire to improve and expand services to clients within the regions has now progressed toward an effort to create a true “system” of services in Missouri.

Any system’s effort to coordinate and integrate services does not come easily. Beyond the theory of the Statewide Planning comes the very difficult process of analyzing the specifics that make up the legal service delivery system in each region. It is at this level that we must be able to marry the very important “local” values that should drive all services at the community level with the “statewide” values that must be in place to support a state system of legal services. The process of joining local values and priorities with the values and priorities of a state system is a process that has only partially been addressed through the planning process. Most of the real work in joining

these two values is done in the “nitty gritty” work of defining and describing individual activities or decisions that make up components of programs or services in Missouri.

As we progress in the implementation of Missouri’s State Plan for Legal Services we will continue to work to identify specific areas in which duplication exists in the service delivery system in Missouri. For instance, each of the programs has traditionally developed its own set of information materials on particular issues of interest to clients. Much of this information is now being standardized for use by all of the programs limiting the need to develop informational materials separately in each of the regions. Work is currently underway to develop educational and informational materials that can be used by all of the programs and that can be updated continually in one location reducing the need for duplication in those efforts.

This same type of duplication exists in the use of technology and software. The implementation of the State technology plan will allow programs to more effectively use technology to reduce duplication in software purchases, more efficiently train staff and integrate certain case management activities. A statewide technology coordinator will be hired this fall to work with each of the regions to identify their technology needs and to work with the technology action team to improve and implement the State technology plan.

Another area where programs are working to coordinate and reduce duplication is in the area of fund raising and resource development. Grant application materials are being shared across regions increasing the quality and likelihood of funding of regional and statewide grant applications. Grant applications from regions that were once competing against each other are now being coordinated or are being developed as statewide

projects. This greatly enhances the prospect of funding. In addition, resource development personnel from the regions are starting to work together to assist each other in strategies to increase resources to the legal services community as a whole. Legal Services of Southern Missouri has hired a full-time resource development professional to increase development activities in that region.

To support these efforts, a Statewide Legal Services Resource Development Action Team is being developed to create a State Plan for long-term resource development in the State. Resource development planning will be broadened to include key players and client group representatives from outside the legal service community. This will allow resource development planning to integrate with resource planning being carried out by State agencies and pertinent other client groups being served by the legal service community.

Considerable planning work is also underway to address immediate funding concerns facing the legal service community in Missouri. Numerous statewide fund raising strategies are being identified in an attempt to develop a legislative package for the coming legislative session. A Special Committee has been appointed by the Missouri Bar to consider and recommend funding strategies for legal services. Staff from the State Support Center are working with the Special Committee to develop planning materials and information to assist in this process.

In our early efforts of working through the “nitty gritty” details of program components on several statewide projects we have already identified opportunities to integrate activities across the regions. The LSC Technology Initiative Grant and Senior

Legal Hotline discussed earlier in this document, are pertinent examples of Missouri's ability to identify and work through the details of implementing a statewide project.

Although the State Plan provided the framework for Missouri's application to LSC for the technology initiative grant, considerable program specific information, negotiation and cooperation was necessary to integrate the individual needs of the programs into the statewide plan for technology. The resulting outcome of that process lead us beyond a "Plan" for technology to the actual implementation of technology components which will serve the entire state.

There are numerous other examples we can point to in our very early planning work in Missouri. These examples include the merger of the Southern Region into one unified program, the planning work being done to develop a statewide resource development plan that will benefit all programs in Missouri, the provision of statewide training for legal service personnel, the development of uniform legal information materials, and statewide planning and coordination activities with state agencies and service providers. In addition, there are countless other activities outlined in the State Plan that are leading to a more coordinated state service delivery system. All of these examples reinforce the position that Missouri is having success working to integrate the values of regional programs with values of a statewide system.

Even with our early success in beginning to integrate certain activities across the State, one of our biggest challenges is to more clearly understand and be able to evaluate how, where, to whom and at what cost services are being provided from region to region. Our efforts to integrate technology will support us some in that regard. But technology integration will not supply all the information we will need. Much work will need to be

done on-site with programs to truly define the service delivery system in Missouri. From that work we will be able to show how systems vary, where duplication exists and how services can be integrated and expanded. In many respects we are just beginning that process.

There are still areas where Missouri can continue to work to identify where duplicate services may exist and where additional coordination and integration will continue to serve the legal service clients of Missouri. Missouri is committed to analyzing how services are being provided in each of the regions and how services can be improved in the rural areas of the State. Missouri has begun the process of working to clearly define how regional services are in fact meeting the needs of the client population as a State system. We hope that we have begun to do just that on particular issues, many of which are described in the body of this report. Missouri is committed to doing that across the system with the desired goal of increasing efficiency and improving services.

Programs in Missouri have traditionally done an outstanding job of meeting the challenge of describing and promoting their services at the regional level. This fact is proven by the support each of the regions has locally. They are now dedicated to doing the same as a State system. Just as the development of programs on the region level took time, effort and vision so will the progression of Missouri as a State system. Where this process will eventually lead Missouri is still to be determined. What the configuration of legal services will look like in the future is just now beginning to be defined. Missouri is charting its course and has voluntarily committed itself to the daunting task of evolving into a system. Missouri is finding this evolution both inevitable and logical.